

Application No. 09/418,902

Docket No. HO-P01896US0

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges extending between said side edges, said article comprising;

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet; and

a pair of end strips, each end strip being fixed, along a longitudinal direction, at a

position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and extending between said side edges, said end strip including at least three sections, each said section being distinctly elastic and distinctly positioned relative to said other sections,

a first section having generally elastic properties and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, including

a second section disposed longitudinally inward of said first section and extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said second section being characterized in that said first section is substantially more elastic than said second section, and

a third section positioned longitudinally inward of said second section, said third section having an inward portion spaced away from said topsheet and said absorbent core.

2. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said second section is formed from an elastic material, said second section having at least one void provided therein, said void being adapted to substantially de-elasticize an area of said second section adjacent said void.

3. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said first and second sections is secured to said topsheet.

4. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip is formed from an elastic material.

5. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 4, wherein said second section includes a plurality of voids adapted to substantially de-elasticize said second section.

6. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section forms a waistband portion.

7. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section is fixed along one of said end edges.

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8. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

9. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section includes a pair of side portions, each side portion being disposed laterally on one side of said inward portion, said disposable absorbent article further comprising:

a pair of side wall structures each having a pair of oppositely positioned end portions, wherein a first side wall structure is positioned between said core and one of said side edges and extends generally in the longitudinal direction, and said other side wall structure is positioned between said core and said other side edge and extends generally in the longitudinal direction; and

wherein each of said side portions of said third section is secured to one of said end portions of said side wall structure such that an intermediate portion of each of said side wall structure is biased generally upward.

10. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

11. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, further comprising a containment pocket having a depth dimension and bounded by a substantially continuous containment wall disposed about said core, said intermediate portions of said side wall structures and said inward sections of said third sections of said end strips being disposed to define, at least partially, said containment wall.

12. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 11, wherein said depth dimension is defined as a vertical distance between an average elevation of an inward edge of said inward portion and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being greater than about 1/4".

13. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 12, wherein said depth dimension is between about 3/4" and about 2".

14. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased upwardly through engagement with said side portions of said third sections to form, at least partially, one of said side wall structures.

15. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said side wall structure includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

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16. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said first and second sections are fixed to said topsheet, and said third section extends upwardly from said topsheet and said core, and wherein said first and third sections are substantially elastic, and said second section is substantially inelastic.

17. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region, a back waist region longitudinally spaced from said front waist region, and a crotch region located between said front waist region and said back waist region, said core being disposed generally in said crotch region, said article further comprising an ear region extending laterally on each side of each of said front waist region and said back waist region, said end strip extending substantially laterally into two of said ear regions.

18. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region and a back waist region each defined partially by one of said end edges, and wherein said end strip is constructed from an elastic material and is secured to said topsheet so as to provide tension across one of said waist regions.

19-53. (Canceled)

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54. (Currently Amended) A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a pair of side walls, each side wall having oppositely disposed end portions, wherein one of said side walls extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge,

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region, said containment pocket being bounded by a substantially continuous sidewall disposed about said core and adapted to retain exudates received in said pocket; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip having at least three sections, each said section being distinctly elastic having generally elastic properties and distinctly positioned relative to said other sections, including,

a fixed waist section fixed along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, said waist section including an elastic end section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge to form an elastic waistband on said each one of said front and back waist regions, and

an elastic inward section disposed longitudinally inward of said fixed waist section and laterally extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said inward section having a central portion substantially spaced from said topsheet and said absorbent core; and

wherein said inward section is secured to said end portions of said side walls such that said side walls are biased generally upward, said inward section and said side walls substantially forming said continuous sidewall of said containment pocket.

55. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein each of said side portions is secured to one of said end portions of said side walls to apply a contractile force between said side walls.

56. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said side walls includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

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57. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 56, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased generally upwardly to form, at least partially, said side walls.

58. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said end strips is distinct from said topsheet and is formed from an elastic material.

59. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 58, wherein said fixed waist section further includes an intermediate section disposed between said elastic end section and said inward section, said intermediate section having a plurality of voids provided therein adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section.

60. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said pocket has a depth dimension defined as an average vertical distance between an inward edge of said inward section and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being between about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and about 4".

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61. (Currently Amended) A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region, said containment pocket being bounded by a substantially continuous peripheral wall disposed about said core and adapted to retain exudates received in said pocket

a pair of side walls each having a pair of oppositely disposed end portions, one of said side walls extending generally longitudinally and positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extending generally longitudinally and positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge, wherein each of said side walls includes an intermediate portion of each of said side edges that extends generally parallel with said core and at least one elastic member secured to said topsheet; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip being formed from an elastic material and including at least three sections, each said section being distinctly elastic having generally elastic properties and distinctly positioned relative to said other section, including,

an elastic end section fixed to said topsheet at a location substantially adjacent said end edge and in generally parallel relation therewith, to form an elastic waistband on said each one of said front and back waist regions,

a substantially non-elastic intermediate section extending inwardly from said elastic end section and in generally parallel relation therewith, said intermediate section being fixed to said topsheet and having a plurality of voids provided therein, said voids being adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section, and

an elastic inward section extending longitudinally inward of said intermediate section, said inward section having a central portion substantially spaced away from said topsheet and said absorbent core; and

wherein each of said inward sections is secured to said end portions of said side walls to apply a contractile force between said side walls and such that said side walls are biased generally upward, said inward sections and said side walls substantially forming said peripheral wall of said containment pocket.

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62. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 61, wherein said pocket has a depth dimension defined as an average vertical distance between an inward edge of said inward section and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being between about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and about 4".

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63. (Previously Presented) A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region located between said front and back waist regions, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region and bounded by a substantially continuous containment wall that extends generally upwardly to retain exudates therein;

a pair of tensioned regions disposed on oppositely disposed first and second sides of said core, each of said third and fourth sides of said core being disposed between said first and second side of said core, and said tensioned regions having a pair of oppositely disposed side portions and an inward edge portion spaced generally upwardly relative to said core so as to form a portion of said containment wall; and

a pair of side wall regions disposed on oppositely disposed third and fourth sides of said core, each of said side wall regions having a pair of oppositely disposed end portions, wherein each of said end portions of said side wall regions is secured to a side portion of one of said tensioned regions such that an intermediate portion of said side wall region is biased generally upwardly and forms a portion of said containment wall.

64. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 63, wherein each of said tensioned regions includes a portion of said topsheet.

65. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 63, wherein each of said tensioned regions is located in one of said front and back waist regions, and each of said side wall regions includes a portion of said side edges.

66. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 65, further comprising an elastic end strip disposed intermediate said core and one of said end edges and extending laterally between said side edges, said end strip including,

an elastic first section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge,

a de-elasticized second section disposed longitudinally inward of said first section, said second section including a plurality of voids provided therein to substantially de-elasticize said second section, and

an elastic third section positioned longitudinally inward of said second section, said third section including said tensioned region.

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67. (Original) The disposable absorbent article of claim 66, wherein said containment pocket has a depth dimension of between about 3/4" and about 2", said depth dimension being a vertical distance between a top edge of said inward edge portion and an average elevation of a top surface of said core.

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68. (Previously Presented) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip consists of said first section, said second section, and said third section.

69. (Previously Presented) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section, second section, and third section are disposed on one continuous layer of said end strip.

70. (Previously Presented) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said first, second, and third sections defined distinctly from one another.

71. (Previously Presented) The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip is formed from a single elastic layer and is defined entirely by said first, second, and third sections.

72. (Previously Presented) The disposable absorbent article of claim 71, wherein, each of said first, second, and third sections extends laterally to define a first lateral edge and a second lateral edge of said end strip.

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1. A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges extending between said side edges, said article comprising:
  - a topsheet layer;
  - a backsheet layer;
  - an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet; and
  - a pair of end strips, each end strip being fixed, along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and extending between said side edges, said end strip including at least three sections, each said section being distinctly elastic and distinctly positioned relative to said other sections,
    - a first section having generally elastic properties and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, including
    - a second section disposed longitudinally inward of said first section and extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said second section being characterized in that said first section is substantially more elastic than said second section, and
    - a third section positioned longitudinally inward of said second section, said third section having an inward portion spaced away from said topsheet and said absorbent core.
2. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said second section is formed from an elastic material, said second section having at least one void provided therein, said void being adapted to substantially de-elasticize an area of said second section adjacent said void.
3. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said first and second sections is secured to said topsheet.
4. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip is formed from an elastic material.
5. The disposable absorbent article of claim 4, wherein said second section includes a plurality of voids adapted to substantially de-elasticize said second section.
6. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section forms a waistband portion.
7. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section is fixed along one of said end edges.
8. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

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9. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said third section includes a pair of side portions, each side portion being disposed laterally on one side of said inward portion, said disposable absorbent article further comprising:

a pair of side wall structures each having a pair of oppositely positioned end portions, wherein a first side wall structure is positioned between said core and one of said side edges and extends generally in the longitudinal direction, and said other side wall structure is positioned between said core and said other side edge and extends generally in the longitudinal direction; and

wherein each of said side portions of said third section is secured to one of said end portions of said side wall structure such that an intermediate portion of each of said side wall structure is biased generally upward.

10. The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said third section is formed from an elastic material.

11. The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, further comprising a containment pocket having a depth dimension and bounded by a substantially continuous containment wall disposed about said core, said intermediate portions of said side wall structures and said inward sections of said third sections of said end strips being disposed to define, at least partially, said containment wall.

12. The disposable absorbent article of claim 11, wherein said depth dimension is defined as a vertical distance between an average elevation of an inward edge of said inward portion and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being greater than about 1/4".

13. The disposable absorbent article of claim 12, wherein said depth dimension is between about 3/4" and about 2".

14. The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased upwardly through engagement with said side portions of said third sections to form, at least partially, one of said side wall structures.

15. The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said side wall structure includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

16. The disposable absorbent article of claim 9, wherein said first and second sections are fixed to said topsheet, and said third section extends upwardly from said topsheet and said core,

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and wherein said first and third sections are substantially elastic, and said second section is substantially inelastic.

17. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region, a back waist region longitudinally spaced from said front waist region, and a crotch region located between said front waist region and said back waist region, said core being disposed generally in said crotch region, said article further comprising an ear region extending laterally on each side of each of said front waist region and said back waist region, said end strip extending substantially laterally into two of said ear regions.

18. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said article has a front waist region and a back waist region each defined partially by one of said end edges, and wherein said end strip is constructed from an elastic material and is secured to said topsheet so as to provide tension across one of said waist regions.

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54. A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a pair of side walls, each side wall having oppositely disposed end portions, wherein one of said side walls extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extends generally longitudinally and is positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge,

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region, said containment pocket being bounded by a substantially continuous sidewall disposed about said core and adapted to retain exudates received in said pocket; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip having at least three sections, each said section having generally elastic properties and distinctly positioned relative to said other sections, including,

a fixed waist section fixed along a longitudinal direction, at a position intermediate said core and one of said end edges and laterally extending in generally parallel relation with said end edges, said waist section including an elastic end section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge to form an elastic waistband on said each one of said front and back waist regions, and

an elastic inward section disposed longitudinally inward of said fixed waist section and laterally extending in generally parallel relation therewith, said inward section having a central portion substantially spaced from said topsheet and said absorbent core; and

wherein said inward section is secured to said end portions of said side walls such that said side walls are biased generally upward, said inward section and said side walls substantially forming said continuous sidewall of said containment pocket.

55. The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein each of said side portions is secured to one of said end portions of said side walls to apply a contractile force between said side walls.

56. The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said side walls includes a portion of said topsheet and at least one elastic member secured thereto.

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57. The disposable absorbent article of claim 56, wherein an intermediate portion of each of said side edges extending generally parallel with said core is biased generally upwardly to form, at least partially, said side walls.

58. The disposable absorbent article of claim 55, wherein each of said end strips is distinct from said topsheet and is formed from an elastic material.

59. The disposable absorbent article of claim 58, wherein said fixed waist section further includes an intermediate section disposed between said elastic end section and said inward section, said intermediate section having a plurality of voids provided therein adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section.

60. The disposable absorbent article of claim 54, wherein said pocket has a depth dimension defined as an average vertical distance between an inward edge of said inward section and an average elevation of a top surface of said core, said depth dimension being between about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and about 4".

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61. A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region, said containment pocket being bounded by a substantially continuous peripheral wall disposed about said core and adapted to retain exudates received in said pocket

a pair of side walls each having a pair of oppositely disposed end portions, one of said side walls extending generally longitudinally and positioned laterally between said core and one of said side edges and said other side wall extending generally longitudinally and positioned laterally between said core and said other side edge, wherein each of said side walls includes an intermediate portion of each of said side edges that extends generally parallel with said core and at least one elastic member secured to said topsheet; and

an end strip secured to each one of said front and back waist regions, said end strip being formed from an elastic material and including at least three sections, each said section having generally elastic properties and distinctly positioned relative to said other section, including,

an elastic end section fixed to said topsheet at a location substantially adjacent said end edge and in generally parallel relation therewith, to form an elastic waistband on said each one of said front and back waist regions,

a substantially non-elastic intermediate section extending inwardly from said elastic end section and in generally parallel relation therewith, said intermediate section being fixed to said topsheet and having a plurality of voids provided therein, said voids being adapted to substantially de-elasticize said intermediate section, and

an elastic inward section extending longitudinally inward of said intermediate section, said inward section having a central portion substantially spaced away from said topsheet and said absorbent core; and

wherein each of said inward sections is secured to said end portions of said side walls to apply a contractile force between said side walls and such that said side walls are biased generally upward, said inward sections and said side walls substantially forming said peripheral wall of said containment pocket.

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62. The disposable absorbent article of claim 61, wherein said pocket has a depth dimension defined as an average vertical distance between an inward edge of said inward section and an average elevation of a top surface of said core; said depth dimension being between about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and about 4".

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63. A disposable absorbent article having a pair of longitudinally extending side edges and a pair of end edges defining a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region located between said front and back waist regions, said article comprising:

a topsheet layer;

a backsheet layer;

an absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet;

a containment pocket disposed generally in said crotch region and bounded by a substantially continuous containment wall that extends generally upwardly to retain exudates therein;

a pair of tensioned regions disposed on oppositely disposed first and second sides of said core, each of said third and fourth sides of said core being disposed between said first and second side of said core, and said tensioned regions having a pair of oppositely disposed side portions and an inward edge portion spaced generally upwardly relative to said core so as to form a portion of said containment wall; and

a pair of side wall regions disposed on oppositely disposed third and fourth sides of said core, each of said side wall regions having a pair of oppositely disposed end portions, wherein each of said end portions of said side wall regions is secured to a side portion of one of said tensioned regions such that an intermediate portion of said side wall region is biased generally upwardly and forms a portion of said containment wall.

64. The disposable absorbent article of claim 63, wherein each of said tensioned regions includes a portion of said topsheet.

65. The disposable absorbent article of claim 63, wherein each of said tensioned regions is located in one of said front and back waist regions, and each of said side wall regions includes a portion of said side edges.

66. The disposable absorbent article of claim 65, further comprising an elastic end strip disposed intermediate said core and one of said end edges and extending laterally between said side edges, said end strip including,

an elastic first section disposed substantially adjacent said end edge,

a de-elasticized second section disposed longitudinally inward of said first section, said second section including a plurality of voids provided therein to substantially de-elasticize said second section, and

an elastic third section positioned longitudinally inward of said second section, said third section including said tensioned region.

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67. The disposable absorbent article of claim 66, wherein said containment pocket has a depth dimension of between about 3/4" and about 2", said depth dimension being a vertical distance between a top edge of said inward edge portion and an average elevation of a top surface of said core.

68. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip consists of said first section, said second section, and said third section.

69. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said first section, second section, and third section are disposed on one continuous layer of said end strip.

70. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein each of said first, second, and third sections defined distinctly from one another.

71. The disposable absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said end strip is formed from a single elastic layer and is defined entirely by said first, second, and third sections.

72. The disposable absorbent article of claim 71, wherein, each of said first, second, and third sections extends laterally to define a first lateral edge and a second lateral edge of said end strip.